

the Jackson, MS-based Stewpot Legal Clinic—an organization providing legal assistance to the homeless. He has worked with Habitat for Humanity and served as a committee chairman for the Metropolitan Crime Commission. His tireless work has prompted leaders in the Jackson, MS, philanthropic community to laud his efforts and impact.

He has been named one of Mississippi's Top 40 under 40 by the Mississippi Business Journal and honored as Jackson's Finest by the Mississippi M-S (Multiple Sclerosis) Foundation. He is an active member of Christ United Methodist Church in Jackson, MS, and is a loving husband and father of two.

The President's nomination of Dan Jordan comes as no surprise, given his education, experience, reputation, and temperament. I believe that when confirmed, Dan will excel as a fair, honest, measured, and capable judge. I am proud to have the opportunity to voice my full support for Dan's nomination, and I look forward to his confirmation.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I yield back all time on the judge nominations.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. All time is yielded back. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the nominations, en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The President shall be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. FRIST. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that there now be a period for the transaction of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

AMERICANS IN LEBANON

Ms. STABENOW. Mr. President, earlier this week I spoke about the fact that there would be tremendous hardship on people who are currently in Lebanon—American citizens leaving in the midst of a war zone. The stated policy, earlier this week, was to require people to pay a fee to leave, and I am appreciative of the fact that, after speaking out and after introducing a bill that, in fact, would allow them to waive the fees, in fact, the Secretary of State has done that.

I appreciate the fact that they are proceeding with that and the fact that

people are now beginning to move from the region. I urge that that continue to happen as quickly as possible. We have many innocent people in harm's way. We need to remember that and do everything we possibly can to protect them.

MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Mr. SPECTER. Mr. President, I have sought recognition to speak briefly about the situation with Hamas attacking Israel from the south, the Hezbollah attacking Israel from the north, and the actions of Israel in defending herself in accordance with international law under article 51 of the United Nations charter.

The action against Israel from the south was provoked by Hamas and the Palestinian Authority with the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier and the firing of rockets into southern Israel. The action against Israel from the north was provoked by Hezbollah firing rockets into northern Israel. Regrettably, the conflict has escalated but the parties responsible for the conflict are Hamas to the south and Hezbollah to the north.

The action of Hezbollah comes as a surrogate for Syria and from Iran. An Israeli ship was struck by an Iranian missile in conjunction with other circumstantial evidence of Iran having so-called advisers in Lebanon. There is strong reason to believe that the rocket was fired by Iran—not conclusive, but strong reason to believe. If so, it is an act of war.

The United Nations ought to call Iran and Syria on the carpet to explain their conduct in backing Hezbollah, in providing personnel to do more than train Hezbollah, more than advisers being integral parts of the military offensive of Hezbollah.

The Israelis living in northern Israel have complained about Hezbollah having a knife at their throat. With so many rockets poised on the southern Lebanese border and with a provocation of Hezbollah, it certainly warrants the action which has been taken by Israel on the premises.

It is regrettable that there have been civilian casualties, but I do believe that Israel has made every reasonable and realistic effort to minimize such casualties. There is inevitably collateral damage in war, but this is an occasion when the international community ought to call Iran and Syria to task for their provocative acts for using Hezbollah as a surrogate.

In the context of what has happened, I think President Bush was entirely correct in his statements that Israel had a right to defend itself against Hezbollah in the north and a right to defend against Hamas in the south.

Mr. President, I speak today about the recent unprovoked and coordinated attacks that have been launched on Israel by Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Gaza. These provocative attacks are further highlighting the role

both Iran and Syria play in supporting Hezbollah. Israel is now forced to fight a defensive war on two fronts as Hezbollah terrorists and Palestinian militants are committing countless acts of aggression towards Israel.

Israel's response to Hamas's and Hezbollah's continuing bombardment of Israel, the murder of its soldiers, and the capture of three Israeli soldiers is justified. Israel unilaterally evacuated settlements and military bases in Gaza last September after an occupation since the 1967 Middle East war. It has not returned with significant forces since then, despite near-daily rocket fire from the Gaza strip into southern Israel. As recognized by the U.N., Israel completely pulled out of Lebanon in 2000, despite missile fire from Southern Lebanon into Israel. The capture of Israeli soldiers was unprovoked by Israel. Were the United States bombarded by Kassams and Katyusha and were its soldiers kidnapped we would also respond with force—proportionate force—the force necessary to cease the bombardments and kidnappings. Yet again, the Middle East faces a crisis brought on by those opposed to the peace that is sought by so many.

On September 12, 2005, to the jubilation of the Palestinians living in Gaza, Israel unilaterally withdrew its military and civilian presence from every inch of Gaza as part of a bold and courageous effort to reduce the tensions with Palestinians and enable them to better build a strong society on their own territory. The Palestinians in Gaza wasted no time destroying all Jewish houses of worship that were left behind in Gaza, but the world, including the Israelis, remained silent because they did not want anything to derail this sincere effort for peace. Just several months later, the Palestinians elected Hamas, a terrorist organization, to lead its government. During this time, Kassam missiles have been regularly launched from Gaza into Israel and on June 25th, Palestinian gunmen within Hamas captured a 19-year old Israeli soldier, Corporal Gilad Shalit, and killed two others, at an army post within Israel. Corporal Shalit is the first Israeli soldier to be kidnapped by a Palestinian armed group since 1994. Israel immediately demanded release of the soldier. Hamas responded by offering only to provide information about Corporal Shalit, not his release, in exchange for the release of over 400 Palestinians in Israeli jails. Israel rightly refused an exchange, and hoped that international pressure would succeed. Having waited 3 days, on June 28th, Israeli troops pushed into Gaza to find and free Corporal Shalit.

President Bush appealed to Palestinian Fatah leader, Abbas and our Middle-East allies to exert pressure on Hamas to free Corporal Shalit. The U.S. ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, called on the Syrian president, Bashar Assad to arrest Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, who is harbored in

that country. Additionally, Egypt and Jordan urged Syria to use its influence with Hamas to win Shalit's release. With no soldier and no prospect of his release, Israel continued its offensive, arresting 60 Palestinian officials and launching air strikes on bridges to prevent movement of Shalit, on weapon storage sites, and on Gaza's central power station. Hamas continued to launch Kassam missiles into Israel targeting civilian population centers; and Palestinian militants, seeking cover among Palestinian civilians, used RPGs, grenades, mines, and assault rifles to impede Israel's actions. This is how the Palestinian leadership responds to Israel's genuine actions for peace. The Israelis endured great political and emotional divisions when they forcibly removed their own people from Gaza, but they thought these sacrifices were necessary for a lasting peace. The Israelis demonstrated remarkable restraint in the face of these attacks from Gaza and in the initial days of the kidnapping of Corporal Shalit. But, when it became clear that Hamas did not share Israel's desire for peace, they had no choice to respond with force.

Then on July 12th, Hezbollah killed eight soldiers and captured two more from within Israel, near the border with Lebanon. Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah said that this was not in response to Israel's recent air strikes in Gaza, but was something they had wanted to do for "over a year". Hezbollah's killing of eight Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of two others represents an unprovoked act of war against Israel. Israel fully withdrew from southern Lebanon in May 2000. This peaceful step by Israel was certified by the U.N. Security Council as having met the requirements of U.N. Security Council Resolution 425, which called for an Israeli withdrawal and for Lebanon to assert control over the area vacated by Israel.

Israel rightfully opposes any prisoner exchange with Hamas or Hezbollah. Israel cannot send the message that it will release hundreds of prisoners each time Hamas and Hezbollah capture an Israeli, soldier or civilian. That would only encourage more kidnappings, and increase the power of Hamas and Hezbollah resulting in greater instability to the region and undermining the peace process.

Following Hezbollah's kidnapping, its firing of Katyusha rockets into northern Israel and demand for a prisoner swap, Israel responded with military force directed at Hezbollah's infrastructure in Lebanon, accurately calling Hezbollah's actions an act of war. Israel struck Beirut's airport to prevent the removal of the Israeli soldiers and to disrupt military supplies, struck Hezbollah's television station, and struck numerous roads, bridges and Hezbollah quarters to disrupt communication. Hezbollah responded with increased and deeper rocket attacks, which for the first time reached far enough into Israel to strike Haifa, 20

miles over the border. These far reaching missiles appear to be built by the Iranians and pose an extreme threat that Israel has not previously faced with Hezbollah. In 2004, the United Nations passed a resolution calling for Hezbollah to be disarmed. Not only has no serious effort been undertaken to disarm them, but rouge regimes continue to supply them with new weapons, training, and other support. The world should unite in its outrage at this behavior by Hezbollah and its allies and unite behind Israel and the forces of peace to bring a swift end to this conflict and to press for the safe return of Israel's soldiers and the enforcement of the UN resolution.

It is worth noting that while Israel has responded with strong force in its attempts to rescue its soldiers and root out the terrorist networks on its borders, it has made great efforts to minimize civilian casualties. Israel regularly drops pamphlets to warn civilians of upcoming actions and attempts to secure meaningful intelligence so that its strikes are targeted on the people and places involved in terrorist activity. These are courtesies that the Hamas and Hezbollah do not extend.

As we all now know, these actions of Hezbollah and Hamas can be seen as an extension of aggression from Iran and Syria. Iranian president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has publicly stated his desire to "wipe Israel off the face of the map." The Iranians have helped Hezbollah launch hundreds of missiles into Israel and have provided Hezbollah \$100 million annually. Syria provides the home, safe haven and command center to Hamas leader, Khaled Mashaal, and it continues to sponsor acts of terrorism. The timing of these attacks served to destabilize negotiations between the Hamas and Fatah Palestinian parties, derailing progress in the peace process. The events also distract the international community from Iran's nuclear ambitions at a time of heightened pressure on the Iranian government to curtail its program.

I support the President's statement that calls for an unconditional release of the captured soldiers, and holds Syria and Iran accountable for Hezbollah's actions but I encourage him to do more. There is opportunity for hope in this crisis. Many Palestinians and Lebanese citizens do not support the aggressive actions of Hezbollah or Hamas's military wing. The international community must support the Lebanese government and the Palestinian Authority in representing their many moderate citizens who seek peace and security for their families and communities. Now is the time for the forces of peace and moderation in Lebanon to not only aspire for peace but take action to stop Hamas and Hezbollah from pulling their people into deeper conflict. If terrorist factions continue to attack Israel and capture Israeli soldiers, Israel is left with no other choice but to defend its people and its borders.

I have made many trips to Israel and the Arab countries in the Middle East and am deeply saddened by the recent events. I will continue to support peace in the region and oppose all acts of terrorism.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to 45 young Americans who have been killed in Iraq since April 6. This brings to 595 the number of soldiers who were either from California or based in California who have been killed while serving our country in Iraq. This represents 23 percent of all U.S. deaths in Iraq.

LCpl Juana Navarro Arellano, 24, died April 8 from wounds received while supporting combat operations in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. She was assigned to the 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, Okinawa, Japan. She was from Ceres, CA.

Cpl Richard P. Waller, 22, died April 7 from wounds received while conducting combat operations in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

LCpl Eric A. Palmisano, 27, died April 2 after the truck he was riding in rolled over in a flash flood near Al Asad, Iraq. Palmisano was listed as Duty Status—Whereabouts Unknown until his body was recovered April 11. He was assigned to 1st Transportation Support Battalion, 1st Marine Logistics Group, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Joseph A. Blanco, 25, died of injuries sustained in Taji, Iraq on April 11 when an improvised explosive device detonated near his Bradley Fighting Vehicle and he subsequently came under small arms fire during combat operations. He was assigned to the 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Fort Hood, TX. He was from Bloomington, CA.

LCpl Marcus S. Glimpse, 22, died April 12 as the result of an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA. He was from Huntington Beach, CA.

LCpl Philip J. Martini, 24, died April 8 of a gunshot wound while conducting combat operations in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA.

Cpl Salem Bachar, 20, was killed due to enemy action in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq on April 13. He was assigned to Headquarters Battalion, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, CA. He was from Chula Vista, CA.